in the China of the Eastern Chou, intellectual activity was marked—although here a comparison with the era of the great Greek philosophers would be more accurate, for the Eastern Chou was the outstanding creative period of Chinese thought. Unlike the process in Europe, moreover, division was succeeded suddenly by political union, and this was accompanied and followed by increasing uniformity in culture.

THE HEGEMONY OF VARIOUS FEUDAL STATES

The China of the Eastern Chou, then, was divided into a large number of states. By the seventh century B.C., five of these had begun to emerge as somewhat more powerful than the others. In the Northeast was Ch'i, in parts of what are now Shantung and Hopei; in the North, in the modern Shansi, was Chin; in the West, in the modern Shensi, was Ch'in; on the plain, not far from the old centers of culture, Sung; and in the South, centering in the present province of Hupeh, Ch'u. Four of these five, it will be noted, were on the frontier. They could grow by expansion outward—away from the older centers of culture—and their populations probably included strong infusions of "barbarian" blood. Ch'u, indeed, appears to have been almost entirely non-Chinese in race, originally non-Chinese in speech, and partly so in culture. Some members of its ruling aristocracy probably came from the North. These frontier states strove to control the older China, largely the present Honan. Here was the traditional center of culture and of political authority. Here, too, the many small principalities constituted a tempting prey to their larger neighbors. Only one, Sung, was able to make an effective bid

for power against the frontier states, and its importance was transitory.

The first of the five strong states to achieve the hegemony was Ch'i. Tradition declares it to have been under an unusually able ruler, Huan, advised by a distinguished minister, Kuan Chung, that, in the first half of the seventh century B.C., it acquired wealth and prestige. By vigorous administrative, military, and fiscal reorganization, undertaken through the leadership of these two men, the state was transformed. The wealth of the prince was increased by monopolies of staple industries, including especially the manufacture of salt and iron. Commerce was encouraged. When some of the minor states into which the older centers